

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-22. (Canceled).

23. (Currently Amended) A method of checking security documents provided with at least one element of predetermined electrically conductive properties representative of the identity of the document, comprising the steps of:

feeding the document at a predetermined velocity along a path;

transmitting energy by way of capacitive coupling through the element of the documents from a plurality of transmitters to associated receivers;

deriving a first signal from each receiver as a function of the conductive properties of the element;

comparing the first signal against a reference signal representative of the identity of the document;

~~The method of claim 22,~~ further comprising the step of transmitting the energy from each transmitter at a different phase position.

Claims 24-27. (Canceled).

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23[[27]], further comprising the step of deriving the first signal as a function of the velocity;

further comprising the step of deriving the first signal as an amplitude signal;

further comprising the step of converting the first signal into a digital signal;

further comprising the step of presetting the amplitude in accordance with predetermined properties of a document of a certain kind; and

further comprising the step of determining amplitude over time.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of deriving a second signal for distinguishing between documents of different kinds and identical

amplitudes.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of separating documents the first signal of which conforms to the reference signal from documents providing a first signal differing therefrom.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of selectively combining the first and second signals for actuating a sorting device.

Claim 32. (Canceled).

33. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for checking security documents provided with at least one element of predetermined electrically conductive properties representative of the identity of the document, comprising:

means for feeding the document at a predetermined velocity along a predetermined path;
means disposed along the path for transmitting energy;

means disposed along the path for receiving the energy by way of the electrically conductive element;

means for generating a first signal as a function of the received energy;
means for storing a signal representative of the identity of the document;
means for comparing the first signal against the representative signal ~~The apparatus of claim 32~~, wherein the means for transmitting energy comprises a plurality of antennae for transmitting energy of different phase positions.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the means for receiving energy comprises a plurality of antennae each of which is associated with a transmitting antenna.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the means for generating the first signal comprises a selective amplifier and an analog to digital converter.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 35, further comprising a trigger having an input connected to the output of the analog to digital converter.

37. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 36, further comprising means for generating a second signal in response to movement of a document along the path.

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the output of the second signal generating means is connected to the trigger.

39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the second signals means comprises a light barrier positioned to intersect a document moving along the path.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 38, further comprising a monoflop connected to the output of the trigger.

41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the means for generating the first signal comprises a selective amplifier and a rectifier.

42. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 41, further comprising a micro-controller connected to the means for generating the first signal and comprising means for storing reference signals representative of the identity of the document and for comparing the first signal against the reference signal.